Anarchy Online, Funcom and the Potential Future of the IP (Revised)
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Prologue

I have played [Anarchy Online](#) since it's BETA days back in the year 2000, and a proud member of the AO community for over a decade. I have a great fondness for the game. Who does not?

Unfortunately my love of the game does not extend to the company itself ([Funcom](#)) as a whole. Year after year it seems they make more bad decisions than good ones. What could save their company from the downhill path it seems to be on for so many years? Possibly development?

Let's be honest here, if FC was a success their stock would be valued at least 10 times what it is worth now. It's not. They have invested in new games (that rarely seemed to meet their financial expectations) and their proprietary engine (**Dreamworld**) to which they have been holding onto for many years.

Most gamers have heard of [Unity engine](#), or [Unreal engine](#) and other engines out there. What most of these engines have in common is that they are available for use by **thousands of developers** and **millions of users**.

When was the last time you heard the **Dreamworld** engine being used by more than the small team of developers at Funcom and a few thousand enthusiasts. If the Dreamworld engine was state-of-the-art at any point in the past few years, other developers and companies would have approached Funcom to use their engine.

The problem is not exclusive to AO. The issue extends to [Age of Conan](#) and [The Secret World](#) as well. AO was not even being upgraded to the full version of the Dreamworld engine, but a **modified lesser version of it**. It's lacking rationale may had to do with compiler resources.

Because the company made serious mistakes, it had to downsize. This led to their consolidation of three teams, into one. Now we have a smaller group of developers working on three MMO's, at the same time. Juggling back and forth between three titles, hoping to keep three different communities happy.

I think they need to let go of the Dreamworld engine. Instead of sinking any more money into an engine that is far from perfect, and far from being a standard in the MMO gaming arena.

I think the concern for the FC shareholders held back those who were in charge from making good decisions which required some risk. **Anarchy Online won over 20 awards in the first three years**, including international awards, editor's choice and high ratings.

Age of Conan received generally favorable reviews, but **no awards** that I could find online. **The Secret World** received a **"most anticipated" award and a "Rising Star" award** before and after the initial launch.

Comparing all three titles, I can tell that Anarchy Online **had the most potential**. Unfortunately it never reached it's full potential. I believe that the company can have a future if they look back to their former MMO flagship title.

There is just too much work to be done, if they continue using the Dreamworld engine, which is difficult to work with. If it was easy, the developers would have achieved much more in the past seven years.

In other words, the Dreamworld engine must be put aside and move past it. The best chance, in my humble opinion as a gamer, would be to use the [Unity game engine](#).

This would allow developers the power to build a new MMO with a far more powerful engine and the company the option to **hire freelancers who are knowledgeable** with the **Unity engine** (thousands around the world, compared to a handful right now who know how to use the Dreamworld engine).

The best situation would be for the company to go private, but that is unlikely because I highly doubt there is any investor **insane** enough to buy FC. Why would anyone **risk millions of dollars** in a company that has proven to have failed over and over (stock price reflects this).

If the company is to not only survive, but thrive, it needs to **reinvent itself**. Anarchy Online 2 is the most likely shot the company has not only to restore its reputation, but to be a more profitable company.

I believe that FC should embrace each of their MMO's community as a resource rather than a weak sounding board. When I say resource I don't mean posting feedback, where the loudest voice is usually **the trolls**. No, I mean resource as in **artistic**.

Concepts for new content, things which usually the company pays thousands of dollars (or euros). In exchange, they can offer to upgrade accounts, in-game special items, bonus, immortalize their name in-game, etc. It's recommended to link accounts with personal social media accounts for account safety. This becomes necessary when the game goes free to play. For extra security; the accounts of family could als be selected for the same security-purposes.

Changing the name of the company would not hurt either, move away from the name "Funcom". Honoring the Norway roots, it could easily carry the name of a norse deity or viking theme. Like *"Rising Knarr Studios", "Valhalla Entertainment"* or like some of the more known gaming companies with a single name (like **Blizzard**, **Valve**, etc). *Asgard* would be perfect.

New name, new potential **marketing branding**. I doubt FC management would have the courage to rebrand itself in this way though.

The future of the AO IP would either be a new MMO **prequel or a sequel** to it. I have spent months coming up with a few ideas for both. Be warned, this is going to be a long read. It's in 3 parts, first is the prequel, second the sequel and last are the things which applies to both regarding technology, features, community reach and marketing.

Part 1: The Prequel

The first option would be a prequel. The current Anarchy Online year is 29487, the corporate wars started in 29389 and it ends in the year 29442. The storyline can take place within the 53 years of the Corporate Wars because at the time Omni-tek did not have enough planetary forces to defeat the clans. Potential titles for the game could be: Dawn of Rubi-ka, Rise of the Clans, Anarchy Ascending, Rubi-ka Online, Notum Online, Notum Storm, Dunes of Rubi-Ka, etc.

The game needs to be simplified in some aspects but not dumbed down, with similarities to AO mixed with more standard MMO features. A combination of both will bring former players and new players alike.

The Intro

The original game had an exciting CGI intro, however creating one to compete with other standard MMO's would be too expensive to create even if it's only a few minutes. It would be far more cost-effective to use in game footage and a solid voice actor to narrate the introduction to the game.

I would think that this could even be more cost-effective if a deal could be made with a DJ from Gridstream Productions which have been very loyal to AO Community and have collaborated with FC in the past. Most of their DJ's have good voices. Offering to immortalize his/her name or nickname as an NPC in an important role in a quest line would certainly be an acceptable payment for services (as gamers most of us would immediately say yes).

It is the year 29419, 30 years into the Corporate Wars. The Council of Truth has kept the clans in line with an uneasy unofficial ceasefire with the Omni-Tek leadership to keep other corporations from seizing control of the planet.

The previous year the CoT lead an unexpected coordinated effort with OT when Sol Banking Corporation landed mechanised troops and war-machines on Rubi-Ka. This lead to an ensuing and drawn-out ground war that is still ongoing.

There are always occasional confrontations between clanners and omnis, usually hardcore zealots that refuse to trust the opposing faction.

The CoT not only coordinates military strategy with OT, but at the same time make contingency plans knowing the Corporate Wars eventually will end, which will likely terminate the ceasefire with OT.

Omni-Tek leadership is glad the clans have joined their effort to defend their property, and secretly work on propaganda campaigns to attempt to sway clanners into joining OT, to take advantage of the ceasefire.

Allies by necessity, both factions are trying to secretly play against each other while maintaining an appearance of unity. Plans within plans.

Meanwhile Sol Banking Corporation and their allies continue to attempt to take Rubi-Ka by force (they will be crushed in 29420) and through deception (even after the Corporate Wars end).

Slogan: Which side will you join?

New Player Video Tutorials

See Part 3.

Character Creation

The breeds should remain the same with 4 options as in the original game. Character customization must be similar to the Sims 4 game (no child models of course), where you can customize your character in detail. It should be easy to Google what I'm talking about, instead of having to write an entire page or two about it. Sims 4 has two missing features in character creation, height and weight that also should be included.

Players cannot change the basic appearance of a character until lvl 40 and it will be expensive.

The prequel will have a more limited set of professions with options to specialize in different skill sets. Also each profession name would be based on which faction you join.

When choosing a name, numbers are not allowed. Players can create a name up to 32 characters (minimum of 4 characters) with up to two words with a single space between (like in Fallen Earth MMO).

Players can have up to 5 character slots, additional slots can be purchased in the Item Store.

Professions

5 professions for each faction. There is no neutral faction (potentially it could be added in an expansion).

Corporate Agent or Clan Spy. This profession would be a combination of the original agent and fixer professions which focuses on stealth, use of rifle and assault rifle weapons with scopes, long distance combat, infiltration, sabotage, hacking, impersonating enemy professions for short periods of time, wall climbing, forgery, holographic decoys and stealing. Only this profession starts with a ground vehicle. They can snare and root any target. Only light armor available for this profession. Medium health, medium stamina. Difficulty would be high.

Corporate Supplier or Clan Trader. This profession would be a combination of the original trader and bureaucrat professions which focuses on resource production and protection, critical to their faction. The primary weapon is pistol which can be dual wielded, with the ability to summon a mechanical pet as the secondary weapon for protection for short periods of time. A trader has access to exclusive hidden resources and shops. They can snare any target. Also it can use hidden underground tunnels for fast travel. Based on their level at trader gets between 10% and 80% more credits from shops compared to other professions. This also applies when buying from shops, they pays less credits for items the higher level they are. Light and medium armor available for this profession. High health, low stamina. Difficulty would be medium.

Corporate Surveyor or Clan Scout. This profession would be a combination of the original adventurer and doctor professions with the ability to heal and limited morphing. The primary weapon are either one-handed edged weapons or two-handed blunt weapons. The secondary weapon is a summoned wild animal. Outside cities they move faster than any other profession on foot and gain a 25% speed when using vehicles due to the extensive knowledge of terrain. Only this profession can see all enemies on the mini map at 100% radius, in comparison to other professions that can only see a maximum of 75% radius. Because of their affinity with animals they are able to calm them, this does not apply to humanoids. Light and medium armor available for this profession. Low health, high stamina. Difficulty would be easy.

Corporate Soldier or Clan Fighter. This profession would be a combination of the original enforcer and soldier professions. The primary weapon are either two-handed edged weapons or assault rifles. A special ability called "back up" can summon a temporary NPC equal in level and weapon damage to the player for a short period of time in combat. This profession can taunt extremely effectively on single or multiple targets. Heavy armor and shields are exclusively available to this profession. High health, medium stamina. Difficulty would be easy.

Corporate Engineer or Clan Inventor. This profession would be a combination of the original nano technician and engineer professions. The primary weapon is explosives. The second weapon is a mechanical pet which stays with them until it dies. Only this profession has the ability to build military grade explosives and holographic decoys. This profession is highly effective in enhancing resources to the highest degree for tradeskilling. Light and medium armor available for this profession. Low Health, high stamina. Difficult would be medium.

Factions

At this point in the game it should be explained to the player that selecting a faction will determine how well-equipped the player will be when they enter the game. **Clan faction** will have weaker weapons but normal armor. **Corporate faction** will have stronger weapons and armor. The corporate players will have an advantage, it will be the easy start. Clan players will start with a disadvantage, it will be a more challenging start.

Of course there must always be an option in game to change faction. To be fair, players should have the opportunity to switch sides once per character for free in the game by completing a quest. Of course this comes at a price were any reputation gained will be lost (reputation will be explained soon, keep on reading).

If a player decides to switch faction a second time, then they will have to purchase a faction form from the Item Store.

Basic Stats

AO has six abilities: strength, agility, stamina, intelligence, sense, and psychic. The prequel will be slightly different with the following abilities: **charisma**, **agility**, **endurance**, **intelligence**, **strength** and **willpower**. These are more down-to-earth (and easier to recognise) abilities.

Main abilities will have derived attributes. The endurance and strength abilities affects the health attribute. While the endurance and agility abilities affects the stamina attribute. Intelligence and willpower affects mind attribute. Endurance and willpower provide Heal/Nano Delta respectively.

The charisma ability determines how well NPC's are willing to interact with you, meaning that if you have high charisma you'll be considered trusted and more missions will be available to the player.

Derived Attributes

The derived attributes visually displayed as part of the UI, with the **standard health and stamina bars with addition of the mind bar**. Of course the red bar will be health, the blue bar will be stamina and the yellow bar represents the mind attribute. The stamina bar will determine movement speed, without stamina players can't sprint. The mind bar determines actions related to your skills.

Basic main abilities and derive attributes are dependent on breed selection. Atrox have higher endurance and strength. Opifex have higher agility and intelligence. Nano mage have higher intelligence and willpower. Solitus is more balanced overall, but has lower main abilities.

Health Delta cycle will be similar of the original Anarchy Online game, Stamina Delta cycle will be similar to the Nano Delta cycle of the original Anarchy Online game.

Skills

Characters can raise 8 different skills:

Armor – This skill allows players to equip progressively more powerful forms of armor allowed by their profession. Related attributes are endurance and agility.

Combat Training – This skill allows players to increase the defense against ranged and melee attacks. The difference between this skill and your opponents weapon skill affects how much damage you take and whether you receive a critical/normal/minor hit. Related abilities are strength and endurance.

First Aid – This skill allows players some abilities to heal others and is required to use items made with the medicine tradeskill. Related abilities are intelligence and willpower.

Team Tactics – This skill allows players to activate buffs on teammates that can improve defenses, stamina and mind regeneration. Related abilities are intelligence and charisma.

Melee – This skill allows players to inflict more damage in combat and use of different types of melee weapons. The difference between your skill and an opponent Melee defense affects how much damage you do and determines your opponent's chance to be critically hit. Related abilities are strength and endurance.

Pistol – This skill allows players to inflict more damage in combat and use of different types of pistol weapons. The difference between your skill and an opponent pistol defense affects how much damage you do and determines your opponent's chance to be critically hit. Related abilities are agility and endurance.

Rifle – This skill allows players to inflict more damage in combat and use of different types of rifle weapons. The difference between your skill and an opponent rifle defense affects how much damage you do and determines your opponent's chance to be critically hit. Related abilities are agility and willpower.

Negotiation – This enables players to get better prices from vendors and allows them to conceal their faction allegiance. Related abilities are intelligence and charisma.

Every time a character levels, a certain amount of improvement points (IP) is earned like in AO. These improvement points can be spent on raising any of the 6 main abilities or any of the 8 skills. Every 5 levels a character gains an IP reset point to either reset a single ability or skill. At

level 80 they earn a full IP reset for all abilities and skills which can only be used once per character.

Players can purchase either single or full IP resets from the Item Store.

Nano Formulas

Nano formulas will be almost identical to AO, requirements will be based on profession and skills. A limited number of nano formulas will be generic, meaning not profession specific. I'm sure a good number of nano formulas can be recycled from the original game.

The nano attribute is replaced by the mind attribute. They work exactly the same for old AO players which will be familiar with it. This also applies to NCU belts and memories.

Augmentations

Augmentations (before the time when they were called Implants) will have a lesser role compared to AO. The main reason, it's because it's more than 200 years in the past. It would make sense for them to be less advanced and powerful. Instead of having an aug on each arm like AO implants, you can only have it in one arm. No brain aug because most prototype brain augs lead to madness or permanent loss of skills. This simple explanation can limit the augs slots to 5-6. Additionally can brain's be designed based on neuroscientific researched concepts.

It simplifies this aspect of the game, but a decent variety should be available for customization of each profession.

Trade Skills

The prequel will be different from its predecessor regarding trade skills. In AO the best armor and weapons is made by the engineer profession. In the prequel, all players can raise their trade skills to build approximately 80% to 90% of the number of items available to the players. The exception will be items which are exclusive rewards from unique mobs, raids, quests and some missions.

Trade skills fall into the following categories:

Armor Craft – Construction of body armor, clothing and repair kits.

Kinetics – Construction of pistols and rifles, ammunition and repair kits.

Architecture – Construction of tents and survival equipment to secure a camping site. Construction of personal fortress or keep (for PvP playfields) and related defense equipment. Construction of harvesting equipment.

Cooking – Creation of food to buff health, stamina and mind regeneration attributes.

Mining – Allows players to harvest mineral resources for use in other trade skills.

Nano Med – Creation of medical supplies and equipment, including health/stamina/mind stims and anti-venoms.

Nano Programming – Creation of nano formulas and upgrades.

Wilderness – Allows players to harvest resources from plants and wildlife for use in other trade skills.

Recycling – Allows players to harvest resources from abandoned or disabled items or locations.

Nanotechnology – Allows players to build advanced devices such as tools, power sources, holographic devices, vehicles and vehicle repair kits.

Blacksmithing – Construction of one-handed or two-handed edged/blunt weapons and repair kits.

A player can specialize on blacksmithing and construct great weapons without actually meeting the requirements to use them. The player could be a Corporate Supplier which uses pistols and has no use for blacksmithing weapons but instead use the tradeskill for additional income by selling the weapons through the market or directly to other players.

Tradeskilling vendors will sell holo books with recipes to create items, these books will have requirements for purchase/use. A low level character won't be able to purchase a holo book which is beyond his skill to learn.

Once a holo book is purchased, the player only needs to use it and it will automatically upload and be added to the list of recipes available to the character. Also when interacting with the vendor, recipes which have been already learned will be flagged or marked as such.

Players can only build items in a specific building in major towns. There should be at least 20 tradeskill terminals within it.

Structural Integrity

Weapons, armor and vehicles have a structural integrity stat which is affected by damage received. For example if weapons and armor when a player started a fight where at 100 integrity against multiple mobs, at the end of the fight regardless if alive or dead, the integrity will be less

than 100 depending on the damaged received. At zero integrity armor and weapons are disabled (not destroyed).

This feature gives the player a sense of attention to the character on a regular basis, because no one wants to fight with weapons and armor which are not effective in combat.

It is easy to make repairs to weapons, armor and vehicles because they will be repair kits available from vendors specific to the type of items in general. For example a basic range weapon repair kit will restore any pistol or rifle up to quality 20 to 100 integrity, advanced versions of the repair kit will work on quality 21 to 50 while highly advanced will work on quality 51 to 70. Elite repair kits will work on quality 71 to 100.

It is common in MMO's for players to drive vehicles right through clusters of mobs, because it is the fastest way between point A to point B. Since the player will go through the mobs much faster than on foot, then he will only receive damage from a few mobs. However, there must be a price to pay to balance things out.

Therefore, while a player is inside a vehicle, 30% of the damage he receives will be absorbed by the vehicle. Thus even though driving through mobs might be the fastest way to get somewhere, there is always a risk of the vehicle becoming disabled and the player being forced to either abandon the vehicle and run away or fight the mobs.

Reputation

In addition to players being able to specialize within their profession, they will have the option to gain reputation within their own faction. The clans will have different branches, separate from each other. Let's say there is a clan named "Sand Walkers" that are mainly located across the deserts of the planet.

By completing quests offered by NPC's of that clan a player gains reputation which gives access to equipment offered by the clan that requires to have a certain amount of reputation to buy and use.

Not all clans will be in good terms with each other, so once a certain clan is chosen, the player will not be able to gain reputation with a clan which is considered "unfriendly". This also applies to Omni-Tek departments, which are always in competition with each other like in real corporations.

Each clan or corporate department will offer different equipment and benefits. You can still join a player run organization of your own faction were members do not share the same reputation. This might sound like a conflict of interest, but most people do work side-by-side in real life without sharing common personal interests.

Leveling Basics

It certainly will not be like AO, there would be no 220's running around. The maximum level could be 80, with the potential for expansions to raise 5 additional levels each. With future expansions the maximum level should be 100 and no higher. Once that cap is reached, expansions must not raise it further.

It is far easier to add new mobs, quests, missions, play fields and events rather than complicate the basic gameplay of the game. Making changes to the core gameplay by adding more abilities, skills and attributes will be far more likely to unbalance the game than other content. I mentioned this in reference to both Alien Invasion and Lost Eden expansions in AO. AI added new levels and perks which made players stronger while LE added new levels in the form of research.

If the players are given the choice of increased power or remain as they are, almost every time they will go for the power. This is just human nature within most gamers. Therefore changing the core gameplay by adding new levels, abilities, procs, perks or other similar features has the result of making every mob in the game weaker than before. This creates an imbalance which is very hard to fix across the entire game.

The World

Most of the planet will be desert where sandstorms are common on a regular basis. Rain will be rare so there'll be very few areas with green grass (due to Omni-Tek's weather control system). However if lot's of mind power is being exercised it has disastrous effects on the weather which in turn affect characters. Half of the corporate cities will appear to be under construction (they will also be lush with grass and trees). Every city, town, outpost and base will proudly have tall flagpoles with the Omni-Tek logo on the flags.

The clans will have it rough with far fewer major towns made of stone in comparison to the corporate cities where metal is everywhere. However the clans have a slight advantage where some of their outposts are underground which makes them far safer than the opposing faction.

The major cities and towns including outposts will proudly display a clan banner on a flagpole.

The standard minimap and world map like in the original game will be here as well. Both maps will display the location of people in your team or raid. Resources, all types of terminals, waypoints (you can set more than one), vendors, quests NPC's and banks also will be displayed in the world map and mini map.

Also players can find faction sided random weapon/item stashes, which when successfully lock picked (otherwise it explodes) will provide phat lewt that matches the character's level. To make

sure this is balanced, there is a limit of how many can be opened per 24hr period. Furthermore, lock-picking successfully will require group effort as this skill will become team-effort dependant.

Also to prevent high levels from dominating areas meant for low levels, there is a level scale system.The higher level a player is, the lower the number of stashes can be lock picked per day.

For example a lvl 10 can find 100 stashes in a day, while a lvl 80 can only find 10. The logic is that the stronger a player is, the less reliable on the stashes he becomes.

There are no whompahs or grid. However high levels can use the hidden unicorn grid (formerly known as fixer grid). It will have a lot less exits than the one in AO.

PvP

The prequel would have to be PVP centric, because even though there is a ceasefire between the clans and Omni-tek there are always small clashes between members of both factions. With a similar layout to the original game, the North regions would be held by the clans while the South regions would be held by Omni-tek. The center region would be filled with contested play fields, which can be captured by completing PVP quests.

Once a playfield is captured, they cannot be recaptured for 24 hours. During that time players can safely set up temporary camps or outposts to harvest resources which are exclusive to the PVP play fields. Players cannot attack guards of their own faction.

An optional feature of these PvP playfields could be trenches and faction morale. Trench warfare was quite vicious back in WW1 and also in WW2. Not too hard to look at some historical footage and get some inspiration for it. Faction morale can either be based on number of kills or on the percentage of PVP quests completed. The bonus from faction morale is between 1% and 5% to xp that applies to participants based on their contribution to their faction if they win.

The world map will display (by color and a faction logo) which side is holding a certain PvP playfield.

Quests

There must be a serious main questline which explains to the player the backstory of the chosen faction. From the point of view of the clans, they are fighting to liberate their homeworld from the clutches of the corporation. From the point of view of the corporation, they are trying to stop the clans from taking what is legally theirs.

Both faction questlines need to be well written, to make the player feel that he matters to the faction he chose to join. In other words, the player needs to feel like a clan or corporate hero.

Each questline must make the opposing faction look cruel, heartless and irrational from their point of view. This can be done with a pair of good writers.

Side quests must be short (30 mins long each at most) but fun, not directly related to the faction of the player. Like protecting a convoy, delivering classified intel, scouting an area, rescuing someone behind enemy lines, finding and repairing important equipment, tracking an enemy spy, stopping a bomb from exploding, convincing a friend's wife that he is not cheating on her, etc.

Mobs

A number of AO mobs could easily be recycled, like the leets, sandworms, vultures and eremites. Of course they need to look more vicious and wild than the original ones.

A logical question here is, how to introduce new mobs which technically are not in the "future" AO. Well, one of the things which would make sense without contradicting the AO bestiary would be to have small amounts of mobs in large varieties. Endangered species always have lower populations.

The standard MMO strategy is to make one mob and recycle it in different parts of the game with minor texture changes. Instead small amounts of mobs with maybe 2 varieties will be specifically located in a single playfield.

For example, normally 1000 mobs in a playfield which (this is a guess) may be divided in groups of 100 of the same type, meaning only 10 different types of mobs. The breakdown needs to be rebalanced, so that instead it could be something closer to this:

100/100/100/100/100/50/50/50/50/50/50/20/20/20/20/20/20/20/20/20/20

Now instead of 10 different type of mobs, in a playfield you encounter the groups of 100 and 50 which imho would be the recycled classic AO mobs, and then the groups of 20 which would be the new mobs. A total of 21 different type of mobs.

This probably would limit the number of the playfields when the game launches, but also provides an excellent opportunity for expansions to introduce new playfields and mobs.

Part 2: The Sequel

The second option would be a sequel. The current Anarchy Online year is 29487, the safest way to place the storyline of the game would be about 100 years in the future. It would be a perfect way to reset things with sort of a new start.

The Intro

The most practical and less expensive way to do this (because it will be a long intro) is in comic book format (like Marvel Heroes MMO). The Kyr'Ozch are defeated after 50 years of constant invasions due to a temporary alliance between the corporation and the clans lead to the final victory.

Alright, so why did the clans as a whole joined forces with their most hated enemy... because the aliens had used a toxin which had killed most of the physically vulnerable people on Rubi-Ka. The casualties were mainly the elderly and children from both factions.

The outrage and call for vengeance was so powerful that even the Sentinels agreed to the alliance. After the victory, a truce was signed similar to the first Tir Accord (this one is called the Athen Accord).

A memorial is build in neutral territory to remember the innocent people who died from the toxin. This memorial is crucial to the storyline.

A few years after the aliens are no longer around, rumors surface that Omni-Tek and the Clans are working together on weapon technology based on Kyr'Ozch devices acquired from the alien flagship that fell on clan territory. News outlets across hundreds of systems spread the news as fact. This forces ICC to take action.

ICC investigates and concludes that there is no evidence to support the claim and closes the matter publicly. Several corporations (including Sol) begin a propaganda campaign against Rubi-Ka itself with claims that OT and the Clans have an alien weapon that will bring destruction to thousands of worlds.

ICC is flooded with requests to reopen the investigation from dozens of corporations and thousands of leaders from corporate worlds. Things quickly escalate when the entire population of a Sol corporate colony are found dead.

Thousands are dead and within a month Sol announces that a biological weapon was used that matches the Kyr'Ozch toxin.

Panic spreads quickly and corporations begin to make political and military moves.

Corporations which had been allied or were business partners with OT immediately break ties and distance themselves.

All the corporations which had fought together against OT during the first Corporate War reunite. No formal declaration of war is issued as required per ICC regulations. The surprise

attack on OT across hundreds of systems is devastating. ICC is powerless, no corporation dares to denounce the war as illegal.

Rubi-Ka is too valuable to attack from orbit, so instead a large fleet creates a blockade and the planet becomes isolated from any possible outside help. However a show of force is made, both the memorial and the floating islands of Jobe are targeted from orbit and destroyed.

All remaining portals to the Shadowlands become unstable and close almost overnight. Many suspect the Redeemed and Unredeemed were behind the event.

It takes over 15 years before the war ends (Omni-Tek loses). During that period of time both omnis and clanners on Rubi-ka unify and together secretly build an underground network of outposts and cities (large cavernous areas). In slang would these area's be called Lava-Ka.

The winning side declare themselves victorious and "saviors of humankind". ICC is dissolved within a few weeks. Corporations are now unregulated, they make the rules, and amend them to their benefit.

At the beginning, Sol and it's allies celebrate their victory and agree to share Rubi-Ka's notum profits equally. However soon after hostilities over profit margins arise. The corporations turn on each other, the third Corporate War begins. It is the year 29590.

The skies over Rubi-Ka are lit with battles between corporate battleships. Ships that attempt to land on the planet are either shot down by enemy corporate ships or all contact lost soon after landing.

Slogan: Will you become a Rubikan and join the fight to save the future?

Potential titles could be: Rubi-ka's Fall, Rubikan Sandstorm, Rubi-Ka Underground, The Aftermath, Earth & Sand, I am Rubi-Ka, etc.

New Player Video Tutorials

See Part 3.

Character Creation

Same as prequel with one exception. A new breed, a hybrid between Solitus and Kyr'Ozch. Humanoid with green skin which is highly intelligent and is attuned to alien tech better than any other breed. Real-life heads can be uploaded based on Artificial Intelligence camera-modelling.

AO has 14 different professions, the sequel will have a more limited set of choices. No Keeper or Shade since Shadowlands are no longer a part of the game. New players begin as a

Rubikan. An alignment to a clan or omni family can be selected. Choosing a **clan family** gives the player access to more defensive equipment to start with. Choosing an **omni family** gives the player access to more offensive equipment to start with.

Players can't change the basic appearance of their character later on (but can change hairstyle and body modifications - tattoos/earrings/rings) this will be clearly shown in a double confirmation process before exiting character creation.

Players will have the choice of picking from 3 different underground cities they wish to start in. Each city has a it's own stories, missions/quests, vendors, items, etc, though they are tied together in terms of world story and background.

Players are allowed to have a maximum of 6 character slots, additional slots can be purchased at the Item Store.

Not Professions, Paths

Instead of choosing a "profession", players choose a "path".

Wanderer - The life of a wanderer is risky. They walk the deserts and are known to prefer caves to the safety of underground cities like most Rubikans. Always exploring and experts in camouflage they are respected for their extensive knowledge of Rubi-Ka's terrain. They are experts with bows and knives. They are the only one who are able to tame desert reets. Bonus to some skills if clan aligned.

Merchant - Unlike the traditional meaning of a merchant whose focus is profit, a Rubikan merchant is compared to the oasis in the desert. Respected by all, merchants provide rare and uncommon items needed to maintain equipment used by all rubikans. Shotguns are their prefered weapon. They are known to always travel with a beast of burden to carry their wares. They are the only one who are able to tame sand mammoths. Bonus to some skills if omni aligned.

Monk - Some rubikans chose a life of spiritual awareness. Part of their lifestyle is meditation to clear their minds and strict physical training to strengthen their bodies. They believe that the best weapon is the body itself, unarmed combat is not just common, but a rule among Monks. They are the only one who are able to tame brown leets. Bonus to some skills if clan aligned.

Tinkerer - If you want to see a Tinkerer smile, show him something you think can't be fixed. No task is too small or too large when it comes to building and repairing anything. From a simple hammer to an intricate nano-infused circuit welder, a tinkerer will use tools expertly to get the job done. Tinkerers can be easily spotted by their large tool belts and little mechanical helpers that follow them. Their method of self defense are explosives. Bonus to some skills if omni aligned.

Nanoweaver - After the destruction of Jobe most Nano-Technicians withdrew from the public eye. The art of mastering nanobots becomes a rarity until they emerge from obscurity after a few decades. They consider themselves teachers and follow rules established by their leaders which are members of the "Circle of Jobe" (in honor of the fallen City of Jobe). Nanoweavers mainly encourage the use of nanobot for defense rather than offense. Bonus to some skills if clan aligned.

Defender - Descendants of clan fighters and omni soldiers that banded together to be the protectors of Rubi-Ka follow the military lifestyle. Masters of armed combat they prefer either heavy two handed weapons or heavy ranged weapons. Some call them tanks due to their slow movements because of wearing thick armor and large amounts of ammo all over their bodies. Their reputation of being fearless has helped maintain order in underground outposts and cities. Bonus to some skills if omni aligned.

Lifegiver - Healers by nature, to be a Lifegiver is an honored and respected way of life. Welcomed everywhere, they not only heal the sick and wounded but enhance those who may face danger. They are sworn not to do permanent harm against other humans, making their life very challenging when traveling on their own. They are the only ones who are able to tame black wolves. Bonus to some skills if clan aligned.

Basic Stats

The sequel will keep AO's six main abilities which are: strength, agility, stamina, intelligence, sense, and psychic. Main abilities will have the same derived attributes (health and nano).

Derived Attributes

The derived attributes visually displayed as part of the UI, with the standard health and stamina bars. Of course the red bar will be health, the blue bar will be nano attribute.

Basic main abilities and derive attributes are dependent on breed selection.

Atrox have higher stamina and strength. Opifex have higher agility and sense. Nano mage have higher intelligence and psychic. Solitus is more balanced overall, but has lower main abilities. Alien Hybrid has high intelligence but other abilities are much lower. Health/Nano Delta cycle will be similar of the original Anarchy Online game.

Skills

Characters can raise 10 different skills:

Body Protection – This skill allows players to equip different types of armor and clothing. The requirements to wear related items are based on the materials the items are made of.

Defense Training – This skill allows players to increase the defense against ranged, melee and explosive attacks. The difference between this skill and your opponents weapon skill affects how much damage you take and whether you receive a critical/normal/minor hit.

Regeneration – This skill allows players some abilities to heal themselves and others using medical equipment.

Close Combat – This skill allows players to inflict more damage in combat and use of different types of melee weapons. The difference between your skill and an opponent melee defense affects how much damage you do and determines your opponent's chance to be critically hit.

Ranged Combat – This skill allows players to inflict more damage in combat and use of different types of ranged weapons. The difference between your skill and an opponent ranged defense affects how much damage you do and determines your opponent's chance to be critically hit.

Explosives Training – This skill allows players to inflict more damage in combat and use of different types of explosive weapons (like nano grenades). The difference between your skill and an opponent explosive defense affects how much damage you do and determines your opponent's chance to be critically hit.

Stealth – This skill allows players the use of different types of holographic camouflage that would cover their entire body to be hard to be detected by opponents and harder to hit if detected. Camouflage comes in different colors to match the many different terrain across Rubi-Ka.

Taming - This skills allows some players (depending on their life choice) the ability to tame certain wildlife.

Nanoweaving - This skills allows players to use basic nano formulas, Nanoweavers are able to reach their maximum potential through this skill.

Barter - This enables players to get better prices from vendors.

Every time a character gains level a certain amount of improvement points (IP) like in AO. These improvement points can be spent on raising any main abilities, skills or crafting skills. Every 2 levels a character gains an IP reset point to either reset a single ability or skill.

At level 50 players earn a full IP reset for all abilities and skills which can only be used once per character. Players can purchase either single or full IP resets from the Item Store.

Nano Formulas

Nano formulas will be almost identical to AO, requirements will be based on path and Nanoweaving skill. A limited number of nano formulas will be generic (available to all players). I'm sure a good number of nano formulas can be recycled from AO.

The nano attribute from the original game is replaced by the mind attribute in this game. They work exactly the same for old AO players which will be familiar with it. This also applies to NCU belts and memories.

Implants

Implants will have a larger role compared to AO. The main reason, it's because it's a century into the future. It would make sense for imps to be more advanced and powerful. To add a bit of a mix, alien tech combined with nano tech make the new ones so advanced they are called nanite implants.

They can be customized like the classic AO imps, but also they can be "overclocked" to perform better for short periods of time. This can have an effect on basic stats, derived attributes and skills.

Crafting

Tradeskills have degraded a bit because the only place where one can build things safely are in an underground town or outpost (thus now being called Crafting). In the sequel, all players can raise their crafting skills to build approximately 50% of the number of items available to the players. The exception will be items which are exclusive rewards from unique mobs, raids, quests and missions. Tinkerers can create 100% of items.

Crafting fall into the following categories:

Armor – Construction of light combat exoskeleton body armor (because most of the surface has reverted to desert and the weather is hostile with large sandstorms and the only viable armor type is light for highest survivability).

Tailoring - Construction of social clothing and visual customization of armor (dyes and paint).

Firearms – Construction of pistols, rifles and ammunition.

Bio Med – Construction of equipment to buff or regenerate health/stamina/mind, including stims and anti-venoms.

Nano Programming – Creation of items that upgrades nano formulas.

Nanotechnology – Construction of advanced devices such as tools, power sources, holographic devices, vehicles.

Blade Smithing – Construction of one-handed or two-handed edged/blunt weapons.

Players can only craft items in a specific area in underground cities or outposts.

Leveling Basics

Because the game is a sequel, lowering the level cap from 220 would be a bit contradictory. However redefining leveling is an opportunity here. Instead of levels there are experience ranges. You achieve higher ranges are you complete missions and quests and everyday common tasks (like crafting or killing random hostile mobs).

Note: For convenience I've been mentioning it as level/leveling until this point)

The higher the range you achieve, the more improvement points you gain to raise your basic stats, skills and crafting. I think a good cap at launch would be a range of 50, with potential expansions to raise it at most to 70 (no more than +5 range per expansion).

Like I said in the prequel...it is far easier to add new mobs/quests/missions/areas or encounters rather than end up trying to rebalance things after adding a ton of gameplay features.

The World

The entire planet now seems like a large endless desert where highly dangerous sandstorms are a common natural event almost everywhere. No rain has fallen in decades. As far as everyone is concerned there are few trees, plants or wildlife alive on the surface anymore. There are some ruins from the old Clan capital of Tir and Old Athen, the fallen OT HQ and Omni-1 as well, but are very dangerous to visit (boobytraps from the second Corporate War remain).

Rubikan cities and outposts are entirely underground, with a large complex system of tunnels for fast travel. Some tunnels are unstable and dangerous to use (thus some tunnels can only be access by those at 30+ range).

Note: Whompah technology was abandoned once it was discovered that the energy signature it emitted was easy to track by the enemy.

Occasionally tunnels will be breached by enemy corporate soldiers that may have survived a landing on the surface. Players will be notified and a call to arms issued to defend the point of breach (random or planned events).

Rubikans will have it rough with only a handful of cities and outposts. However there will be proud to have been able to outsmart the corporations laying siege to Rubi-ka. A new banner/flag which is a combination of the old clan logo and OT logo is created to unify them.

50 years since the victory against the alien invasion, 35 years since the fall of Omni-tek... Rubikans have not only survived but have strengthened their resolve by planning the unexpected.

They are building a fleet of battleships not only to break the siege but secure the entire system. They are not alone, former high ranking ICC officials secretly have backed them financially and with materials to help in the construction.

The reasons are twofold, on one hand some of them truly believe ICC is needed to maintain the peace in the universe. On the other hand some miss their position of power in ICC and are resolved to regain it, even if it means a direct confrontation with those who disbanded it.

The standard minimap and worldmap like AO will be here as well. Both maps will display the location of people in your team or raid. Tunnels, vendor, building, waypoints (you can set more than one), quests NPC's and banks also will be displayed in the world map and mini map.

PvP

In the sequel, PvP is not a primary feature of the game, it's mostly focused on PvE. However using the original game's Duel system (along with the PvP title rankings) should cover this aspect nicely.

Perhaps also recycling some of the old world PvP instances as part of the underground world (not as a separate instance but an area instead). PvP weekly/monthly rankings available on the official website should be considered.

Part 3: Things in common and common sense

Think outside the Box without falling into a cliff

It is imperative that the budget for the new game (sequel or prequel) is used wisely. For example motion capture (also known as MOCAP) is expensive. Looking for innovative and affordable technology (not developing it) is a must. For example Perception Neuron is an affordable motion capture system (from Noitom Ltd. a chinese tech company) that not only could be used for the new AO game, but other in-house projects. It's even being used in

developing in 3D VR game development (including [Oculus Rift](#)). Future artificial intelligence could model YouTube's video's for behaviour of animals or other stunts and/or gestures which can function as model for NPC's.

Also if the Unity engine is used, **experienced devs** should be hired and not inexperienced programmers. Unnecessary risks are that, **unnecessary**. After a year or two from launch, then junior devs and interns should be brought in not only to help lower the cost of maintenance and development but also to groom potential new talent to stay in the company to strengthen not only the new AO title but other games.

Standard high concept cut scenes are just too time consuming and expensive to make, if any are made at all they must be at crucial points in the main questline. I suggest instead to focus on **voice acting** (to enhance some NPC interactions). A good voice dialogue can easily beat a fancy cutscene. Alternative low budget cutscenes could be produced in a **comic book format** (like Marvel Heroes MMO). Prior community books could be considered too, items mentioned in it should be rebalanced (think of the Cybex book). 'Prophet without Honor' would be material for the role-player community to give input in the future evolution of the game. Also, yoga teacher's can be hired to model en extensive list of yogic poses which can expand the gesture emporium.

Just to make sure the point is made. [Star Wars The Old Republic](#) budget ballooned past 100 million, they spent too much into hundreds of cut scenes, and professional voice acting for every single one. Hell, they picked up a damn Guinness World Record in 2012 for that alone! Over 200 actors, over 200,000 lines of dialogue.

Yes, it gained them some acclaim, however it did not save the MMO from going FTP (Free-to-Play) within a short period of time. **Research** about the mistakes and failures of not only FC itself, but other MMO's must be done, to avoid the same **pitfalls** which usually equals either a **waste of resources** (money) or a **loss of revenue** (money).

A must read is ["Five Lessons Learned as SWTOR Surrenders"](#) from [Forbes](#), ["5 Lessons That Other MMOs Can Learn From ArcheAge's Mistakes"](#) from [makeuseof](#), ["The Two Big Issues Plaguing MMORPG Game Developers"](#) from [taugrim.com](#) as well.

Another issue which is an AO legend in the community, is the fact that early on there was **little information left by the original dev team** to continue the work properly. Years were wasted in **figuring out how the code worked** by the devs who had not been in the original team. The running joke is that the only notes, were writing on **napkins**.

In short, every tool, every feature, every change, every fix and how it was done in detail (and the reason why it was done) must be archived for future reference (and have backups of it). Using an **online To Do List** like [Trello](#) would be greatly beneficial. A good read is ["8 production pipeline tools to keep your game on track"](#) from [develop-online.net](#).

Early Access

Alright, to save time, just read the [Steam](#) page regarding Early Access. This will not be a choice, but a necessity to not just help the marketing aspect of the game, but also crucial feedback from the community while development is ongoing before release. Further (Steam) integration could also provide for cloud-based prefs-saving for each specific resolution being used to play with.

Item Store should be available as well at 15-20% lower cost than when released, to encourage purchases. This will also help determine what kind of items players are willing to pay for.

Subscription vs FTP

Let's face the truth, the only successful subscription MMO's that have been able to sustain it are [World of Warcraft](#) (fantasy) and [EVE](#) (space sci fi). There may be a few others out there, but they are tiny ants in comparison to the huge juggernauts that are WoW and EVE (9 straight years of subscriber growth in EVE). WoW has between 7-10 million subscribers, EVE has over 500,000 subscribers.

FTP is the way to go, most small to mid range MMO's profit and grow that way.

Why try and convince gamers to shell out $10-$20 a month when there is practically hundreds of other MMO's which are **Free-to-Play** among which a good number are decent/good.

Microtransaction, good content, marketing that targets not only potential new players but the active community combined with weekly/monthly video updates can **keep players interested** in remaining active in the game. If they are not playing, no chance they will spend any money.

It will be tempting to start as a sub to then later on switch to FTP. However there is a problem with that. **Perception**. Gamers have the perception that an MMO that starts as sub then switch to FTP soon after, was not interesting enough to pay for... that **something is wrong with it**, that the game is unable to keep gamers **entertained**. This perception must be avoided like the plague. Socially gifting this F2P game to friends should yield additional benefits in form of items.

Bugs and Feedback

Besides the standard automatic report pop up whenever the game crashes (optional of course) there should be an in-game UI option to report a bug or give feedback which when chosen automatically opens a web browser to the forum specific to either one.

New Player Video Tutorials

Creating an entire playfield (like the **New Player Experience** in AO) with NPC's and quests which probably teach the player the basics in the first hour of play (or more if there is even a chance for the player to miss some things) would cost months of development time and money.

Instead use a location where a character would start in (which will make it familiar once they enter the game) and create **tutorial videos** as part of the character creation step. Instead of months, this option would take a few weeks.

Add some basic [Adobe After Effects](#) polish and give the player the choice to replay any of the tutorials at anytime and this would be a road for players to understand the game easily even when faced with the more complex parts of it.

Of course you have to include the basic video options like pause, fast forward, etc. Videos to explain breeds, professions, factions and everything needed to understand and enjoy the game are crucial. Also have the videos available on [Youtube](#) and the official game website. This certainly would be cost effective.

Twinking

One of the very important aspects of anarchy online is twinking, not having it in the game would be **commercial suicide**. However it will be slightly different because neither prequel or sequel will have research bonuses or perks like in AO. Players can still over equip a character through the use of items, augmentations/implants and nano formulas.

Combat Mechanics

In the prequel the combat system and mechanics should be similar to AO's. The difference will be the way the AI reacts to **character actions**. When a mob is at **30% health** it will attempt to **flee** and if able to avoid damage for a certain amount of time while fleeing, it then makes a call for help. **RNG** (Random Number Generator) will determine if the call is heard, and if it is heard, by how many mobs and how strong they are. **Bosses** will always **spawn minions** every time it loses **10% of their health** (apart from the normal amount of waves of mobs that protect it), so if it gets damaged too quickly, the more **dangerous** the situation becomes.

In the sequel, the combat system is more **complex**. Because a lot of the gameplay will take place underground many new mobs will have night vision. Their AI will be able to **quickly disable any light source nearby** to maintain an **advantage** (the location will not become visually black like a blindfold but more like night time with a full moon). Most mobs are in packs and fight together and only **retreat when 80% of the pack is dead**. **Bosses** do not have minions, instead they have **"fury stages"** where every time it **loses 20% of health** it becomes **10% stronger** making a Boss encounter a more **"epic" battle**.

Missions

In either game, all missions will be provided by **humanoid NPCs** rather than mission terminals. In the prequel missions will be in the **open world** (buildings and open field), **not in instances**. Instances will be used for the main questline, side quests and raids.

In the sequel missions/quests/raids are in **instances** (because of the **underground theme** that limits the open old in the surface). Also on the minimap upon entering it will be **blacked out**, revealing areas as the player moves and **"discovers it"**. When in a team/raid the minimap updates as well when others in the group moves and they **"discover" areas**.

Random locked doors require a **lockpick set** utilized by scroll-wheeling; instead of turrets there are **cameras and/or sensors** which alert humanoid hostiles. Any mission with humanoids have a **5 level alert system** which starts at default of 1; every time a player is detected the alert level goes up and more hostile mobs **spawn**. Hostile mobs automatically move towards a camera or sensor when a player is **detected by it** as well. This adds a **sense of danger and urgency**. Just to clarify, sensors **do not cause any kind of damage** to players. **Chests** can only be found in humanoid missions.

Note: With the right equipment, cameras and sensors can be disabled without raising the alert level.

Missions with **non-humanoid hostiles** instead of cameras/sensors will have **hidden natural traps** (like stepping on a branch immediately alerts hostile mobs). Instead of chests, there are **supplies containers** (think Borderlands 2).

No repair missions, they are just too damn **boring** (sabotage missions instead 'cause everyone loves to break stuff). **No hidden fake/holographic walls or hidden explosive mines**, they are more a hinderance to fun than anything else.

Add **humor** to some of the humanoid hostile mobs, specially when a player is detected. **Funny verbal taunts** go a long way.

In the **prequel** all missions must be **turned in** to the original NPC that gave it. Once a mission is complete, a **marker** will appear on the world map/minimap so the player knows exactly which NPC to go back to. Mission categories are similar to those of the original AO (find, kill, etc).

In the **sequel** once a mission is completed, it **automatically gives the reward** and it's removed from the mission list.

Player Run Groups

The old concept of having a full team and making an organization should remain.

In the **prequel** player run organizations will not have their own cities, facilities or equipment. Instead they can choose to **affiliate themselves** with a major town of their faction where they would get access to facilities that increase trade skills depending on their level of **"contribution"**. This will be the **equivalent of paying upkeep** for a city in the original AO game. Organizations can build and own buildings though, generating them discounts/income.

There is an **org bank** to deposit and manage credits similar to the original game. Access is designated by the **group leader** to determine what is the minimum rank to withdraw credits from the bank and the limits of the amount. **Anyone can deposit credits**.

In the **sequel** things are a bit more interesting since the players are encouraged to work together (**no longer 2 factions**), instead there are **communes** that work together where the focus is more in **sharing resources**.

Because of this, there is a **shared storage area** (**100 slots**) available in the Rubikan capital. Area's should instantly (pre-)load without zoning-'walls'. Access is designated by the **commune leader** to determine what is the minimum rank for deposit and withdrawal of items.
Of course, all groups get their own **chat group**.

Raids & Teams

Most MMO's reserve raids for the high level players. IMHO Raids should be available from low to high level players. Raids will have level requirements. For example, a level 80 can't join a raid were only level 20–30 can enter. Mouse side-button's will be default bound to assist designated callers. The subway entrances will be replaced by a rubikan tunnel system (before: whompah's). The raid and team window interface from the original game should not be changed. Loot distribution should have the following options which can be selected by the raid/team leader:

Free For All - Loot is gathered on a first come, first serve basis.
Round Robin - Raid/Team members alternate looting items.
Need or Greed - Loot is randomly selected based on Raid/Team members choice.
Loot Master - Raid/Team leader manually selects who can loot each item.

Also raid/quest instances **do not reset** when the team is wiped. This means that if the team managed to get the boss down to 30%, when they enter again, it will remain at 30% and not back to 100%. The level of **frustration** even when a team of experienced gamers die and then have to start from scratch, is **not necessary**.

To balance this, the instance is **automatically balanced** to the number of people in a team and or raid with the intention to **encourage team play**. A full team would face 10% less hostiles while half a team does not have that advantage (regardless if they are inside the instance or not). Once a raid starts, no new members can be added (except if someone who was already in the raid LD's and reconnected).

Storage, Mail and Market

To centralize the player base within major towns there must be only **one building** where people can have access to the **bank** for **personal storage** with **mail terminals** near them.

Across that building there should be a **market building** with plenty of terminals for players to **create auctions**.

Unlike the original game you can create an auction for an item with different **expiration times**. The most practical would be **1 hour**, **6 hours**, **12 hours** and **24 hours**. A player can make an auction **anonymously** if they so desire, set the minimum bid and even had a buyout price as well. The **market terminal** in every other way should work identical to the **GMS in AO**.

Note: All sales are final, no refunds provided by the game or game staff (except if it' due to a game bug).

Besides the building where banks are located, mail terminals can be found in almost **every outpost across the game**. Players can send mail regardless if they are Premium or not, however each mail has a flat fee (**low price**). Mail can include credits and/or a single item. Mails have a **30 day limit**, after which they are **automatically deleted**. Deletion of any mail requires a **double verification process**. No refund/restoration on expired mail or deleted mail by user.

Banks have 50 slots, no backpacks allowed (to avoid the insanity of keeping track of hundreds of items which mostly are not worth keeping. **Personal inventory is 30 slots**. This should encourage players to have good inventory/bank management.

Additional bank/inventory slots can be purchased from the **Item Store**.

In the **prequel**, to explain being able to trade with anyone (even a player of the opposite faction) it can easily be said that **ICC runs the Market** in the name of fair trade and transactions are private and neither Omni-Tek or the CoT are given records.

In the **sequel**, no explanation is needed since there are no opposing factions anymore.

Loot and Phat Lewt

If there is one thing gamers that play MMO's love is loot. Too much and it makes it a pain to manage inventory and bank. Too little and it makes it look as if the game is **incomplete**.
In the previous section, I described banks and their limitation (no more damn backpacks in them).

Instead of having an unreasonable amount of items which will need to be named, stats added, requirement to equip it and so on... for things which to any experienced player are clearly shop food (an endearing term which means worthless to keep and just sell to the shop) there is salvage. This can easily apply to both prequel and sequel.

Due to the state of conflict in the prequel, plenty of salvage around. Because everyone went underground in the sequel, not only there is plenty of salvage there but also on the surface (even tho very dangerous to travel).

For example a QL 1-25 would be "This is a Very Low Value Salvage" and so on. It would be something like this:

Very Low Value.
Low Value.
Average Value.
Moderate Value.
Medium Value.
High Value.
Very High Value
Extremely High Value.

No fancy names, just "Salvage" with the description related to its value. QL of salvage drop depends on the area (harder mobs, more valuable salvage).

Now to Phat Lewt, which is indirectly related to Raids and Quests. The most practical way, is to have a token system (not as in clan/omni tokens). Those who successfully finish a raid/quest get a certain type and number of tokens (everyone gets the same token reward). They can be exchanged at an NPC for phat lewt.

I would think 3 different types of tokens for low, mid and high level phat lewt based on raid level/quest encounters.

Joining raids (and doing quests) are a guaranteed payoff by saving up tokens to get what the player wants. No more using bots to randomly determine the winner of the best loot, hoping you are not the one stuck with the least valuable things.

Character Respawn & Fall Damage

In the prequel, when a player is defeated (and this must be made clear to the player, there is no death) he/she wakes up at the nearest Omni-Tek or Clan medical station. Like in the original game, there is a rez penalty where abilities and skills are temporarily lowered and recovers back to normal within a short time.

In the sequel the original reclaim system was heavily damaged but enough was salvaged to combine with Kyr'Ozch technology to create a similar system that works almost identical. However, it is pretty much an improvement, there is no rez penalty.

The prequel should have some minor fall damage (because augmentations are not as good as implants). No fall damage in the sequel.

Character Movement & Environmental Movement

When not using a vehicle, characters should always be walking and only when a hotkey is pressed (not held down) will he/she sprint. In the prequel the amount of time a character can continue sprinting is based on Stamina. In the sequel a character can sprint endlessly.

Characters can also crouch, prone and climb to navigate through the environment (some areas can only be reached by using these moves).

There are no teleporters in the open world, to move from one level/floor to another, there are ladders and stairs. A character automatically climbs a ladder by walking or sprinting to it.

Vehicles

Most AO players remembers the day when they bought their first air vehicle (the white yalmaha). However nobody remembers the cheap ugly ground vehicles that they could afford early on with. I believe that adding an air vehicle early on would be a mistake in the prequel.

Also it would look like a cheap copy in some way. Instead players will have the option very early on to buy a ground vehicle similar to a motorcycle, with wheels. The clan version would look like it was put together with leftover pieces from blown up vehicles while the corporate version will have a nice sleek brand-new look to it.

The variety of vehicles should be very extensive. 2-wheel, 3-wheel and 4- wheel vehicles with at least five different models each. Right there alone 15 different types of ground vehicles which can be custom painted in different ways.

Meaning that players can choose different color paints for four different parts of a single vehicle plus you can additionally add logos or stripes. So now we going from 15 vehicles to hundreds of vehicles that will be different due to the level of visual customization. They will all go at the same speed but finding two identical vehicles should not be common (unless a group of players decides to make a very specific look for their rides). Everyone likes to have a unique ride. The same concept should apply to air vehicles and water vehicles.

In the sequel, because most of the world's underground, instead of vehicles there are mounts. For the same reason there are no whompahs, there are no vehicles because they may be

tracked by the enemy. I think having a Mantis or a Sabretooth mount would boost the cool factor.

The same concept for visual customization can be made with mounts with different models and colors of bridles, saddles, skin/fur paint, etc.

Also depending on the type of vehicle/mount, each will have storage slots. The more expensive ones have more storage of course. Also each vehicle/mount will have a health bar and an energy bar. I believe I explained earlier how the health bar works with a vehicle when it gets damaged so I'll skip that (same applies to mount). The energy bar represents what you will call these days fuel (with mounts it's food), it runs out of energy… It stops moving. Players can either trade skill and make their own power cell/mount food or buy it from a vendor.

Vehicle requirements are based on agility, endurance and willpower. Also, they are not based on nano formulas. Instead players use a "nano key" to call their ride, which will appear. When they exit the ride, it vanishes.

When driving a vehicle the character's NCU is wiped of nano formulas. Like in AO, some vehicles are exclusive to the Item Store.

Ammunition

In the prequel, the same way the original game handles ammo should be used. A cool possibility is being able to purchase an ammo belt that could carry up to 50k ammo. It sounds ridiculous, but easy to explain as a "prototype" to compress physical items, a prelude to the grid that exists in AO.

In the sequel however, technology is more advanced and each weapon instead has an energy source that lasts 200 years so it never needs new ammo but instead have a cooldown due to overheating so every few seconds it stops firing (to balance the fact of no reload).

Social List takes over the Friends List

The UI should have a social window where you can see who is online from your player run group, the friends you added, current players in the playfield you are in, people who are on LFT and ignore list.

Of course all these will be separated by tabs, with more detail within each window. For example, not only will be able to see who is online and/or off-line from your player run group but also in which playfield the character is located, their level and profession.

The ignore list not only displays the people that you are ignoring but the date when you added them to the list and the reason why they were added to it by either selecting an option from a drop-down menu or being able to type in a custom text field.

Goodbye NODROP

Every game needs items which should not be tradable, so instead of the NODROP tag, the simple and self explanatory NOT TRADABLE tag is used. Also items can only be deleted under certain conditions. Players can't delete items required for a mission/quest they have until either the mission/quest is completed or the mission deleted from their mission/quest queue.

Deletion of any item requires a double verification process. Deleted items are not refundable/restorable by game staff.

Player and Vendor NPC Trading

All trades between players are considered private and final. No refunds provided by the game, or game staff except when related to a game bug. All trades (with another player or Vendor NPC) require a double verification process.

Vendor NPC's will automatically refuse any trade which includes crucial items which are part of an active quest or mission.

Quest related NPC's which require any sort of trading will only accept items related to the quest and decline any trade which includes anything else besides that.

Housing

Housing should be available from the start of either game with several locations. Each location should have different layouts. One of the mistakes made in Anarchy Online was that expansions kept adding housing which was unnecessary (they were cool tho, but only used for an extremely short period of time).

Each home/apartment can hold up to 100 decorations. Only one residence per character. Dozens of different decorations like beds, chairs, sofas, monitors, rugs, holographic paintings, desks, and other miscellaneous items can be bought from different vendors.

In the prequel some decorations will only be available to one faction but not the other, but the decorations can be used by players regardless of their faction. The exception would be items which require reputation which a character does not have, certain items which are quest rewards or rare faction specific items.

In the sequel all decorations are available, based on character range. Higher range players get access to more luxurious items.

Some items will have the UNIQUE flag (most likely the expensive items). Further customization like different furniture and decorations can be purchased from the Item Store. The company attempt could seek a Joint Venture with a firm such as IKEA for complementary 3D models.

One of the decorations should be a pet item (mechanical or organic), available in different colors, models and breeds. Pet-play should be more central to gameplay, utilizing the middle click (scroll wheel click) as way to move pets to the desired position. Mouse macro's can bind to other pet actions.

It would be nice if a player could select the type of flooring, wall color and ceiling color to create a more personal home. Possibly by importing a design from Google's free AutoCAD application.

The way the original game handled guests should be used (either teamed or with temporary keys). Except when someone who is not the owner of the residence is automatically moved outside if he/she logs off inside.

As an option (would be nice to have), the owner can add names to a guest list which gives access to the residence (but not access to add or remove items). Guests will also be moved out if they log off inside.

Mini Games

In the current state of the MMO market, quality mini games are expected. They should be located in safe areas to avoid any sort of unwanted PvP.

For the prequel a vehicle racing mini-game would be perfect, since all vehicles move at the same speed, then it's based on the players hand-eye coordination to avoid obstacles, make right turns and potentially dealing with other players pushing you off the road or into obstacles to slow you down. A potential twist could be the use of "nano nitro" to boost a vehicle (only works in the racing area).

Racers are ranked on a monthly basis, the 10 best racers in the game receive vouchers for unique and expensive vehicles and vehicle customizations.

Also a hunting mini-game would fit with the prequel, maybe a theme of "overpopulated dangerous wildlife" where the player needs to cull a certain amount and type of mobs within a time limit.

For the sequel, things get more tricky since most of the gameplay is underground. However I think there is potential to introduce a horror themed mini-game where players can enter a tunnel

to try to figure why those who have entered it, have never come out. No new mobs would be required, instead just use humanoid NPC's which are... descendants of the temple of three winds cultists which are now insane murderers.

A stealth mini-game could take place in the old abandoned cities on the surface to try and find old historical records (an opportunity for some good writing to cover the time gap). Old malfunctioning security systems and boobytraps will challenge players, also an opportunity to have easter eggs in the form of... using the old crat/engie pets as malfunctioning droids as part of security systems.

Rewards would be social clothing items (a way to recycle the extensive social clothing collection from Alien Invasion expansion).

A mini game which could be used in either game, would be "Shadowlands Artifacts" collecting. In the prequel it can't be called Shadowlands (because Jobe does not exist yet) so "Ancient Artifacts" would be a more fitting title. These artifacts are spread around the game, located virtually everywhere (not in plain sight for the most part of course), cities, towns, missions, quests, vendors (at random), random location overall.

The twist is that they can be traded between players which could encourage a feeling of bartering to complete sets. Rewards would be that each complete set can be traded for a very unique and rare item which can be placed inside a home/residence to show off or perhaps a "collector title" system, (like the old AO PvP title system).

Goodbye Item Store (sort of)

I have to admit that one of the things that the AO community disliked (at the beginning) was the item store. It seemed like a desperate grasp for cash, however over time the community has accepted it.

Probably the reason why it was not easily accepted was because it was not part of the game when it launched. As it is now I feel that the prices are too high, so to encourage purchases the prices should be lower but with many many more items to choose from. The company should be tuned into its community by incorporating community suggestions and designs for new "items".

It is less likely for someone to spend $10 on 15 items rather than spend the same amount and get 50 to 75 items. Micro-transactions will be the life and blood of this game, as it is of many MMO's who not only survive but thrive this way.

Also, the name "Item Store" does not sound friendly or even current. Premium Shop or DLC Shop seem more up-to-date and expands the meaning of selling content.

It should mainly feature XP Boosts, vehicles & visual customizations, social clothing and weapon visual customizations.

No More Patches

The word patch implies a temporary fix, not a permanent one. Also, the word in no way represents anything new, whatsoever. So instead of a "Patch" the game gets an "Update". It will have a far more positive representation in the eyes of the community even when deploying a small Update.

Also a "Breaking News" newsletter with the Update notes must be e-mailed to all registered users.

Goodbye ARK

As much as ARK benefitted the AO community, the concept is not only outdated but other options are far less risky. A forum specific to report bugs and exploits in combination with a strong forum mod team (volunteers supervised by an FC employee) would cover things quite nicely. Events could be coordinated with a small community team working with active organizations to run PvP and Storyline Events which should be announced ahead of time in-game and through the monthly email newsletter. There should be some staff exclusively 'tuned in' to the forums and rigorously going through archives capable of adjusting / creating suggested items. This will make the community feel themselves heard by the big company.

Rewards for volunteers would be in the form of codes/vouchers and not unlimited premium accounts. This encourages activity and hopefully avoids any "politics" based on position/rank of volunteers. Also an additional bonus is active volunteers get a specific color for their names in the forums and "badges" based on time of activity (this is only for display, badges do not come with any sort bonus).

Also the meaning of being a volunteer must be made very clear to all involved. No pay, no special privileges, no exclusive things which a normal player has no access to. The benefits are codes/vouchers for either premium time or items which any player can purchase.

Goodbye Monthly Development Update

The amount of time that it takes to write a post could easily be used to record a video, probably with more detailed information. It is far more effective to make a 5 minute video where the community see a face and hear the words rather than reading them. Also there are things like humor, charisma and feelings overall that are very hard to express through a post rather than a video. Specially when it's something exciting or... a mistake which needs to be clarified.

During Early Access, a Twitch Devstream should be strongly considered, as a reference check out Heroes & Generals Devstream (also on youtube). It would be cost effective to use OBS (Open Broadcaster Software) which is free and easy to use that has extensive customization for video recording and streaming (supports Twitch, Youtube.

Codes, Vouchers and Social Media

Every email sent to registered users, be it to announce an Update or an Event needs to either have a code or a voucher to either redeem Premium membership (1-7 days) or a cool in-game item. People love codes and vouchers in MMO's, they follow on Facebook and Twitter to get these freebies because they usually have a very short expiration date (between 24-48hrs).

Also these rewards must be given out when certain goals are reached within the social media aspects of the game. For example for every 1k-5k likes on Facebook or new followers on Twitter. Building social media following needs virtual carrots, after all it is a virtual game.

Also Pinterest should be used to post screenshots of upcoming content, feature community pics (like cosplay of a game character or mob), funny pics of devs.

Social Media is here to stay, and the game needs to take advantage of it fully to build a strong and lasting connection with the community and gaming world. There lies potential in integrating the buddy system with social media accounts. Therefore a global account nickname is desired.

Website

Do not allow someone in-house to make the website, the results have been unsatisfactory for years. Hire a freelance web designer, with extensive experience in web development, mobile apps, php, asp, SEO, etc. The website should be hosted on 'anarchy.online' (API: 'anarchy.onl').

The smartest way is to hire through a freelance site that work on an escrow system like freelance.com so money is not wasted on a bad website. An online items database is a must have, with the standard disclaimer of "this item may or may not be in the game at this time". The listing must contain a feature for balancing suggestions or potential future additions with voting.

Apps

A free chat app for ipad/iphone/android/windows phone to encourage players to keep in touch even outside the game. This could also be a simple "API" for which the community can develop upon. API's could also be provided for spawn times like gauntlet or other interesting NPC/mob's.

Also apps which allow players to calculate how to get on implants/augmentations (like Implant Helper), a bestiary app (basic stats of all mobs), repeatable quest/mission/raid lock tracker, mail

app which notifies you when you get an in-game mail including who sent it and if there are any attachment (optional to delete a mail without any attachment), all at very low prices through online app stores (99c each would be perfect to encourage a lot of sales). These could initially be provided by the community and the company would then buy these apps in a later stadium.

Each app should have notifications when new game updates are released and special offers (cross marketing). One free "Anarchy Offline"-app could act as a complementary good when this allows for access to GMI and a global bank account. Players would organise their account(s) in non-game time which leaves more time for interactively playing. The in-game market would stay healthy when players take breaks (they just keep trading & organizing accounts in frozen time).

Cash Cow Spinoffs

Yeah, I'm going there. The AO universe is big enough to allow alternate sources of income not only to support spin offs but also the new AO game as well (NOT to fund another franchise ffs!!!). I think the easiest would be to launch them on android/ipad with microtransactions or very low one-time purchase fee (99c-$2).

How hard would it be for a kid friendly "Save the Leet" game where you try to keep it alive from dangerous Rubi-Ka mobs or humanoid hunters and perhaps even Cyborgs.

Maybe a turn based space strategy game inspired by the "Corporate Wars" era where you control a fleet of spaceships against other fleets.

Another possibility would be "Survive the Fall", where you are an Unredeemed trying to reach a spaceship to escape the planet which is falling apart (splitting into Rubi-Ka and the Shadowlands) due to the excessive notum mining.

How about someone who was captured by the cyborgs on Rubi-Ka who awakens to realize his/her body has been modified (cyborg implants). He/she needs not only fight to escape the underground cyborg compound but also needs to find equipment to neutralize the nanobots created by the implants before he becomes a mindless evil cyborg.

I'm sure that a few creative people could come up with far better ideas for spinoffs.

Note: This should only be considered after 2 years from the launch of the second AO game being financially successful (not just breaking even or making a small profit, but big gains that proves there is a market for the spin offs).

The Final Potential Twist

Well, if there is a follow-up to AO, should it be an MMO or a standalone game instead? Or could there be a MMO prequel/sequel and a separate standalone game to boost the IP?

There are more than one way to go, and plenty of room for the IP to be used effectively to not only make a profit, but to make it a widely known name in the gaming world with a strong positive reputation.